



Comisiynydd  
Cenedlaethau'r  
Dyfodol  
Cymru

**Future  
Generations**  
Commissioner  
for Wales

# The Future Generations Report 2020

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## Executive Summary



**Let's create the future together**

# About the Future

## Generations Report

Producing a Future Generations Report every five years, which provides an assessment of the improvements public bodies should make in relation to their well-being objectives, is a statutory duty of the Future Generations Commissioner. But more than just meeting a 'duty' this report is designed to explain clearly and in many different ways what improving our collective well-being in accordance with the Act is all about.

I want to celebrate our achievements so far and I have included numerous examples of good practice already taking place throughout Wales. However, I will also call out where progress is falling short and point at all the opportunities which we should not miss in the present or immediate future.

This report provides practical advice, guidance and tools for public bodies grappling with making the aspirations set out in this groundbreaking law a reality for people in Wales. It is also intended to inspire action by showcasing big and small actions that are taking place in Wales and across the world.

Throughout the report you will find the following sections directed towards:

- Welsh Government – recognising the particular leadership role they have
- All public bodies and boards covered by the Act (including Welsh Government)

### Recommendations

These are 'what' Government and other public bodies should do in terms of their policies and approaches. They are what I consider to be the most significant things that should be done in the next five years to help us reach the well-being goals. There are specific recommendations directed towards Welsh Government in each chapter and others directed towards public bodies.

The recommendations directed towards public bodies in each chapter are mostly taken from my 'Art of the Possible' Programme and the 'Journeys' to each of the goals. This guidance was published in 2019 and contains practical examples and steps in areas public bodies should focus on in meeting the well-being goals.

### Stop/Start

These relate to 'how' public bodies should do things. They largely focus on the five ways of working, the process for our decision making, for implementing policy and delivering services, and how the machinery of the public sector works.

### Advice on setting well-being objectives

I am required in this report to provide advice to public bodies (for the first time) on the setting and meeting of well-being objectives. Public bodies are required to take this advice into account when next setting or revising their well-being objectives. This advice applies to all public bodies covered by the Act including Welsh Government.

### Big Ideas

Throughout this report you will find Big Ideas of how we could do things differently. They are taken from some of the best examples from Wales and across the world, and many have been fed in by the people of Wales. They aim to inspire public bodies, the voluntary sector, businesses and communities to try new things.

Some of these ideas are also the things we would want political parties to embrace in their manifestos for the next Assembly or local government elections, and over the coming years. I will be working to inspire politicians to adopt the most progressive of policies to secure the best future for Wales.



# Chapter 1 - The vision

## Why does well-being matter?

The '2010's will surely be remembered as the decade of global disruption. And if the first few months of 2020 are anything to go by, living in a fast-changing, uncertain world looks sure to become our new reality. Throughout the 2010s, the shackles of the status quo began to loosen, with events like the EU referendum, alongside advances in technology, a global climate emergency, record migration levels and an unstable global economy, posing uneasy questions for politicians and public alike.

Questions about the future have filtered into all aspects of our daily lives, forcing us to constantly re-evaluate and question what lies ahead.

Many countries are looking to improve the lives of future generations and are exploring the ideas of Ombudsmen, Commissions and well-being budgets. However, Wales remains the only country currently to have legislated for the rights of future generations.

We need to ensure we are preventing problems while seizing all the opportunities our changing world presents us with as Wales has also inherited some of the highest rates of inter-generational poverty, childhood obesity and inequalities throughout the whole of the UK.

**“When politicians fail to look beyond the next election – or even the latest tweet – they are neglecting the rights of future generations.”**

Roman Krznic



The Well-being of Future Generations Act provides an opportunity to change that – and to leave behind a legacy we are proud of. It was the passing of the Act in 2015 that led the United Nations to say, ‘what Wales is doing today, we hope the world will do tomorrow’, recognising the ways in which Wales’s legislative framework complements international initiatives like the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Our groundbreaking legislation is beginning to make an impact. I can see that there is a growing movement of change, with people who believe in improving the social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being of Wales daring to deliver differently within their own organisations and wider, often amidst a backdrop of political uncertainty, continued austerity and of course now the seismic disruption caused by COVID-19.

I am seeing individual champions of the Act, and its ways of working, change the way transport planning is being done in our capital city, reforming the way we think about keeping older people well, shifting beyond delivering ‘services’ to focusing on what matters to them. I’m seeing politicians reject the status quo of addressing congestion through building more roads, instead looking for solutions which are better for the well-being of people and planet.



I am seeing the framework of the law driving contracting decisions so that investment in a new rail contract is done in a way that will also help tackle poverty through provision of cheaper fares in more disadvantaged areas, will use a supply chain of social enterprise and will be using energy sourced in Wales. I am seeing national policy change to support well-being, climate resilience and restoring nature, with placemaking being the core principle in how we plan, design and build communities. I am seeing the roll out of a new education curriculum in which young people will be supported to be creative, enterprising and ethically informed citizens. But while things are changing, more needs to happen across the public sector to make the well-being goals a reality. Where good things are happening, they appear to be pieces of a jigsaw that don't always fit into the wider puzzle of the organisational approach.

**We are off to a solid start but now, more than ever, is the time for our Government and all public bodies in Wales to demonstrate how they are using the Act to frame everything they do and how they are acting today for a better tomorrow.**

## The challenges ahead

Futures thinking might sound like something that falls between astrology and analysing probabilities, but it is an essential practice if we are to meet the challenges facing our future generations. Thinking generations ahead is the norm for some cultures. The Iroquois, for example, are urged to live and work for the benefit of seven generations into the future (approximately a 140-year time span). 25 years might sound like a long time,

but when you realise 25 years ago was only 1995, you realise how hard it is to plan 25 years ahead.

As this report is published we are living through very difficult circumstances. From the pressure on public services, the devastating loss of lives, isolation from loved ones and the potential for long-term damage to the economy, jobs and livelihoods. Despite this, I am also seeing some excellent practice emerging in how public bodies are responding. Many of these responses are in line with the aspirations of the Well-being of Future Generations Act – the partnership working, engagement with the private sector to find innovative solutions, new ways of working and increased use of technology in delivering services, the decrease in carbon emissions, and the programmes which are working with communities to provide services, are particularly notable.

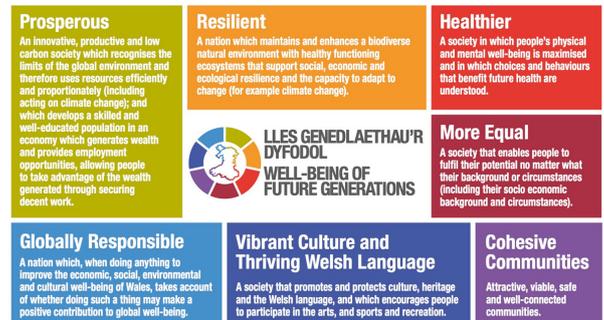
As the impacts of COVID-19 continue to demonstrate, Wales is part of a global community and is susceptible to trends experienced across the rest of the world such as our declining natural world, climate change and resource scarcity, evolving population and demographic changes, poverty and inequality, and technological change. See my full report for the detailed global trends and their foreseen impact on Wales.



# The Wales we want in 2050

The whole Future Generations Report details the vision set out in the well-being goals and this section gives a glimpse of what Wales could be like if we achieved such goals.

- Our businesses, public services, voluntary sector and government have worked together to achieve the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and Wales is a zero-carbon country.
- We have replaced our traditional health system with a holistic wellness service. We still have hospitals, A&E and centres for treatment of accidents and disease, but the major focus is on prevention and keeping people well.
- We have more access to green space and feel more connected to the environment, with people feeling empowered to improve their own health and well-being.
- Technology has helped to keep people healthier for longer and advancement in genomics helps us predict and prevent illnesses before they occur.
- Housing in Wales is a basic human right. Our homes are energy-efficient, with more generous space standards and adaptable interior structures, and are resilient to climate change.
- Technology is integrated throughout our homes, making our lives easier, especially for those with additional support needs. Our overall health and well-being is improved because of this better housing, and our communities are more vibrant and cohesive.



- Culture, the arts, and recreational sport are a part of all of our every-day lives; helping to enrich us and keep us well. The Welsh language is thriving, with over 1 million people in Wales speaking Welsh daily.
- Our planning system allows for green space, renewable energy generation and water management, allowing our natural habitats to thrive. Biodiversity in Wales is flourishing, and everyone has access to green space.
- Through a placemaking approach, planning is no longer seen as something that stops at the border with another local authority, and the system is integrated.
- In terms of our waste, we have moved from a model of use and disposal to one where we reduce, repurpose, recover and regenerate in new ways to create new products.



# The Wales we want in 2050

- Tackling adverse childhood experiences is deeply embedded in the culture of Welsh public services and the number of children living with adverse childhood experiences is extremely low. The system helps the person and no longer simply deals with a specific issue.
- The population of Wales enjoy quality jobs that are future-proofed for the global economy; lifting people out of poverty and enabling them to reach their potential.
- Digital connectivity, particularly in rural communities, has helped people reduce the need to travel, improving work-life balance and has enabled people to readily access the universal, basic services and lifelong learning opportunities they need that support everyday life, regardless of where they live. There will be strong community and cultural networks.
- Our salaries are no longer seen as a measure of our value. Schools teach us skills for life, and we spend more time outside, being creative and learning transferrable skills.
- Technology frees up more time for us to do the things we enjoy and employers value life-long learning. People are empowered by a sense of purpose to do the things that matter to them and there is equality of access to all careers.
- Our transport system is integrated, flexible and multi-modal. It is fully accessible and affordable, whilst being zero-carbon. We spend less of our time commuting to work and we are able to spend more time with our families or doing the things we enjoy.



## Where next?

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**Fortunately, the future is not fixed. The actions we take, or don't take, today, make a difference to the future we see tomorrow.**

While there are a lot of unknowns, uncertainties and unforeseeable surprises just around the corner, there are also a lot of opportunities, new ideas, passion and a vision. We can take Wales towards the future we want.

I am encouraged to see the many ways public bodies, businesses, the third sector and communities are already taking action to take us towards the Wales We Want. Across Wales. Across the World.

By taking bold decisions and actions now we can ensure that our children and our children's children have a happy, healthy and secure future ahead of them. This is our national vision for Wales in 2050.

Each chapter of this report provides details of what this common statutory vision entails as well as providing advice on how we should be getting there.

**This report seeks to provide the inspiration, ideas and recommendations to help us all meet this vision and create the Wales we want for current and future generations.**

